The Economic Structure of Edo Kabuki Theatres
Ichikawa Danjūrō II as a Kyōhō Period (1716–35) Manager

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Kabuki is the representative stage art of the increasingly urban society of early modern Japan and a result of the accumulation of wealth in the social strata of merchants and manufacturers. At the same time, theatres were cores of economic networks supporting a wide range of entrepreneurs. Within this system, lead actors were the prime movers, but they also required wages so high that the theatre turnover often failed to cover expenses. This fundamental flaw shaped the economic structure of the early modern entertainment business.[1]

In the beginning of the Edo period, a variety of more or less permanent theatres flourished both in the old capital Kyoto and the new center Edo. In an attempt to create order in the cities, the bakufu issued licenses for a limited number of theatres, the first of which was Nakamura Za, which opened south of the Nakabashi (present Kyōbashi) bridge in Edo in 1624. The holder of a license, namely the *zamoto* 座元[2], was in many cases only a figurehead. Real management could be handled by a variety of figures. In the Kansai area, legal and economic responsibility was divided between the *kōgyō nushi* 興行主, who was responsible for management and the *zamoto*, who was responsible for staging the shows. The licenses were often bought and sold, creating both legal and economic flexibility. In Edo, management and staging of shows were under the authority of the *zamoto* and the licenses were hereditary, passing from father to son making the system stable but inflexible.[3]

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1 Hattori 1974: 151–56.

2 *Za* means 'seat', and was used for literary and artistic groups 'sitting together' since the Heian period. From the medieval period, it was used for professional guilds too. By extension, during the Edo period, *za* was used for the theatre as a building and the companies performing in them.

3 Hayashi 1985: 1–18.

This article first looks at the financial aspects of theatre business, considering capacity, entrance fees, actor's wages and the role of investors. Secondly, it analyzes the central figure of the world of kabuki during the Kyōhō period, Ichikawa Danjūrō II's diary records concerning his day-to-day activities backstage, focusing on the internal management of the Ichimura Za in the autumn of 1734.

Danjūrō II (1688 – 1758, pen name Saigyū 才牛, after 1735 Ichikawa Ebizō 市川海老蔵, pen name Hakuen 柏莚) was the eldest son of Danjūrō I, and inherited the name Danjūrō and the *aragoto* 荒事 (bombastic) acting style at the age of 17, when his father was killed by a fellow actor at the Ichimura Za in 1704. Danjūrō II is famous for fusing *aragoto* acting with other styles, the most famous example being the role of the elegant but strong Hanakawado Sukeroku. After recovering from a severe illness in 1735, he passed on the name of Danjūrō to his adopted son, Danjūrō III, who died in 1742 at the age of 21. In 1754, the name was given to Matsumoto Kōshirō II, who became Danjūrō IV. Danjūrō II died in 1758 at the age of 71, having firmly established his acting house Naritaya in the world of kabuki. The house still holds a central place today and, among other things, patronizes a select list of famous acts called the *Kabuki jūhachi ban* 歌舞伎十八番 (The Eighteen [Great] Kabuki [Plays]), including the above-mentioned Sukeroku and many more roles created by Danjūrō II.

During the Kyōhō period, the structural problems of Edo theatres were largely overlooked, because of the income generated by numerous spectators. However, the problems became apparent, when economic recession caused by contemporary fiscal reforms hit society. The recession revealed for the first time the graveness of the situation, as with the incident that led to the establishment of the *hikae yagura* 控え櫓 (lit. 'back-up turret') system of interchangeable business licenses. In 1734, one of the three major Edo theatres, the Morita Za was forced to cease operations and apply for *kyūza* 休座[4] due to cash flow insolvency.

Records from the magistrate proceedings are preserved in a handwritten copy, included in *Collection of Old Documents* 旧記拾葉集 (*Kyūki shūyō shū*) called *Memorandum on Inspections of Kabuki and Puppet Theatres and*

4 Lit. "resting theatre", meaning that the establishment would cease operating to prevent accumulation of more debt, and stay closed until the investors were re-paid (to a certain extent). The holder of the business permit, the *zamoto*, would not lose the license as such and could re-open again once the debts had been repaid.

other Investigations 芝居狂言座操座並其外上覧見分御用 (*Shibai kyōgen za ayatsuri za narabi ni sono hoka jōran kenbun goyō*:

> On the 18th day of the 8th month, the zodiac year of the tiger Kyōhō 19 [1734], Yahei, Denbei and Kyūhei from the 5th square of the Kobiki quarters called on Kan'ya, the owner of the theatre they had lent land to. Kan'ya had, due to the depression, an outstanding rent of 535 gold *ryō*, 9 silver *monme* 5 *bun*[5]. He also had other debts to be claimed. Therefore, the landlords will take back their land beginning this spring.[6]

In short, the *zamoto* of Morita Za, Morita Kan'ya IV 森田勘彌 (?–1743) was sued by his landlords for unpaid debts, and because he was neither able to pay, nor could he provide any assurance of doing so in the near future, the landlords reclaimed the land the theatre was built on. On the same day, Danjūrō II wrote in his diary that where Morita Za had been, there was now a vacant lot, indicating that the building had been torn down to make room for a new tenant. It is possible that the tools and timber were seized to cover the remaining debt. Further analysis of this case shows that the state of insolvency persisted for a considerable length of time. Some seven years earlier, in 1727, the deficit had been as high as 1,305 *ryō*, and at this time the landlords agreed to accept half of the ticket sales directly and took over management of the Morita Za. This system functioned well up until 1732, when more than half of the debt had been re-paid. At this point the landowners decided that it was time to return managerial powers to the Morita Kan'ya family. However, they stipulated that re-payment should continue at a rate of half a *ryō* per day.[7] Despite this, up until the 8th month of 1734, less than 1% of the remaining debt had been re-paid. Finally, the the landlords lost patience and decided to evict the Morita Za from the property.

Yet, the landlords felt responsible for the people of the Kobiki quarters. Thus, to avoid mass unemployment, they served as guarantors when Kawara-

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5 The exchange rates varied but in order to facilitate comparisons generally the rate 1 gold *ryō* 両, 小判 *koban* = 64 silver *monme* 匁 = 4,000 copper *mon* 文, 銭 *zeni* is used.

6 JKG: 8th day of the 8th month of the Kyōhō 19 [1734]. 木挽町五丁目弥兵衛、伝兵衛、久兵衛地借狂言座勘弥申上候、近年芝居不繁昌ニ付地代金五百三十五両壱分、銀九匁五分相滞、並借金等催促ニ逢。当春地主共御預申上済 被仰付. N.B.: When quoting diaries and chronological records, the date rather than the page number of the entry will be referred to also in edited documents, as this makes confirmation with both original source and various editions easier.

7 Hattori 1974: 155.

saki Za applied for a permit to operate a kabuki theatre the following year. In 1735, temporary licenses, or so-called *hikae yagura* business permits were invented. These permits gave three substitutes – the Kawarasaki Za 河原崎座, the Kiri Za 桐座 and the Miyako Za 都座 – the right to temporarily replace "the three [licensed] kabuki theatres of Edo" 江戸三座 (*Edo sanza*) – the Nakamura Za 中村座, the Ichimura Za 市村座 and the Morita Za 森田座 – in the case of their insolvency. This system preserved smooth running of businesses in the theatre quarters and enabled enterprises to survive until the Meiji Restoration without addressing its structural weaknesses.

Previous research on Edo kabuki confirms the above-mentioned problem, but, except for Hattori Yukio's analysis, there is little in-depth research on the structure of the early modern entertainment business, and even less is known about the role of the actors within this system. For example, it is unclear why the magistrate continually granted theatres the *hikae yagura* permissions, although they continued to break their promises of expense control, or, how a *zamoto*, who had applied for *kyūza* could re-pay his debts and re-open his theatre later, or, why actors could continue to extract untenable wages.

A paucity of research on the economics of theatre business is accompanied by a general lack of research on the formative Kyōhō era (1716–35), which is due to the scarceness of reliable documents remaining from this period. However, Danjūrō II, one of the key figures behind the creation and consolidation of Edo kabuki, left a diary which outlines the economic arrangements and his role as a manager. The reasons underlying the magistrate's decision, the mystery of the return of the *zamoto* and the actors' wages cannot be revealed by reading his diary. Nevertheless, the power structure created between the holder of the *zamoto* license and lead actors and playwrights can be scrutinized, which sheds light on the reality of the Edo kabuki theatres.

Whereas the original diary was lost in a fire in the early 19th century, fragments of it remain in five different transcripts. While the transcripts have been chronologically edited in *The Document Collection of Ichikawa Danjūrō II* 資料集成二世市川団十郎 (*Shiryō shūsei nisei Ichikawa Danjūrō*), the records used in this paper are originally from *The Persimmon Cover* 柿表紙 (*Kaki byōshi*) and *The Hakuen Diary* 柏莚日記 (*Hakuen nikki*), both first copied in 1802 and now preserved in an annotated transcript by Ihara Seiseien 伊原青々園 (1870–1941) in 1917, located in the archives of the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum at Waseda University.[8]

8 SSNID 162–88.

In this article, actors will be referred to with their main stage name, regardless of what name they were using at the time in question. Danjūrō II mostly referred to his friends and colleges using their pen-names, so these names will be given in brackets in order to facilitate identification in the original diary source. Dates will be given according to the European calendar except in quotations. Quotations are applied according to the original source, but kanji have been changed to the *jōyō kanji* and periods and commas have been added to aid the reader.

The Economic Structure of Theatres

Considering the economic structure of Edo theatres, the bulk of their income was earned from turnover dependent on theatre capacity and price of entrance fees. The cost of a production included among others land rent and costumes, wigs, sets and make-up. Lead actors provided their own costumes and wigs, and paid lesser actors working under them. Theatres provided musicians, sets and a basic wardrobe, but their main expense was paying wages to lead actors, the disparity between which had to be covered by benevolent investors. In the following, theatre capacity, entrance fees, wages paid to lead actors, and role of the investors will be analyzed.

Theatre Capacity

The capacity of theatres varied greatly in the mid-Edo period from Genroku (1688–1704) to Hōreki (1751–64). During the Genroku period, the audience was divided between the luxurious and expensive *sajiki* 桟敷 boxes and the cheap seats on the ground. According to records in *Historical Documents on the Theatres of the Eastern Capital* 東都劇場沿革誌料 (*Tōto gekijō enkaku shiryō*) collected by Sekine Shisei 関根只誠 (1825–93), Edo theatres had up to three floors of *sajiki* boxes by the end of the Genroku period, though it is not clear exactly how many there were, nor how the capacity of the ground seats was calculated.[9]

Theatres were forbidden to use any other than the second floor *sajiki* boxes after the Ejima-Ikushima incident in 1714, when the court lady Ejima 絵(江)

9 TGES 42.

島 (1681–1741), who held the high rank of *toshiyori* 年寄 (elder, in charge of regulations) at the court of the mother of the 7th shogun Ietsugu 家継 (1709–16), was caught having an affair with the kabuki actor Ikushima Shingorō 生島新五郎 (1671–1743). The scandal took place at the Yamamura Za 山村座 and was made possible by corridors running between the back of the *sajiki* boxes and the teahouses. Consequently, the bakufu decided that, in addition to abolishing the Yamamura Za altogether, access to the teahouses would be controlled by abolishing first floor boxes in all theatres.[10] At an inspection by magistrate officials some five years later, both the Ichimura and the Nakamura Za are recorded having 15 *sajiki* boxes on the east side, 16 on the west, 9 in the *mukō-sajiki* 向桟敷 (opposite the stage) making for a total of 40 boxes. The size of the ground area was 8 × 13 *ken* 間 (1 *ken* = ca 1.8 m; ca 14.4 m × 23.4 m = 337 m^2).[11]

Hattori calculates a capacity of 6 persons per *sajiki* box and 7 per one *ken* in the ground area, but speculates that as many as 8 or 9 people could be squeezed in during particularly successful shows, estimating theatre capacity between 1,000 and 1,300 people[12] – in comparison, the new Kabuki Za, which opened in Ginza in April 2013, has a capacity of 1,808 regular seats divided over three floors and approximately 576 m^2 (the 4th floor has an additional 96 seats for spectators of just one act).

After yet another fire, which destroyed all three Edo theatres in 1724, they were ordered to install a tiled roof and fire-resistant walls[13]. In order to fund these improvements, the theatres were allowed to re-open the first floor boxes.[14] Adapting Hattori's calculations, we can assume that the capacity rose to about 1,500 people due to the addition of these 40 first floor boxes. The *masu* 枡 seats known from late-Edo theatre pictures, were not installed until the

10 TGES 45.

11 JKG (29th day 2nd month of Kyōhō 5 [1720]) records states Ichimura Za's measures, but TGES (p. 45) contains inspection records from the same date with the exact same wording as belonging to Nakamura Za. It is possible that Sekine Shisei made a mistake while transcribing the JKG records, but it is just as well possible that there were originally two separate documents, as the two theatres were next door to each other and probably inspected on the same day, most probably by the same magistrate officials.

12 Hattori 1975: 24–40.

13 土蔵造り *dozō zukuri*: lime-washed walls made out of stamped earth.

14 TGES 45.

late 18th century.[15] Thus, during the Kyōhō era, the ground area was loosely divided by the *hanamichi*[16] and aisles for the service staff, making it possible to pack people tightly to maximize capacity, as illustrated for example in the folding screen depicting the New Year's performance at the Ichimura Za in 1733 (fig. 1).

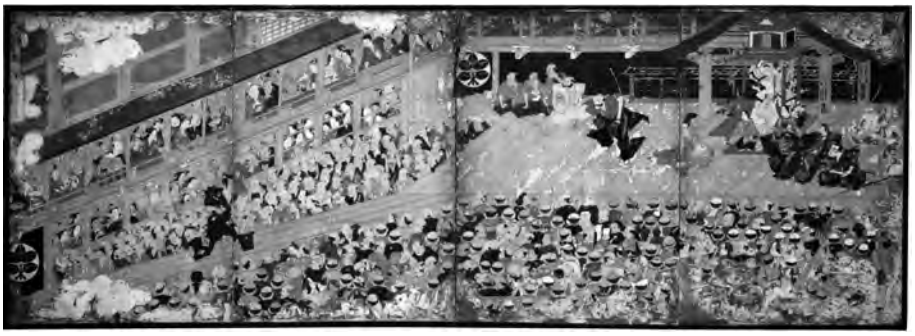

Fig. 1 Folding Screen of the Inside of the Ichimura Za Theatre,
New Year's play "The Soga Brothers' Splendid Alter Egos", 1733

Entrance Fees

Documents on entrance fees show that there existed a *honne* 本値, a price list, which served as a general guideline. There are, however, no records confirming the existence of a *honne*, or hints of a price range during the Kyōhō era.

According to the *Illustrated Instructions of the Theatres* 戯場訓蒙図彙 (*Shibai kinmō zu'i* (1803) by Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776–1822), the *honne* was 25–35 *monme* (1675–2345 *mon*) for the *sajiki* boxes and 132 *mon* for the standard ground seats (called *kiriotoshi* 切落 or *doma* 土間 seats, at the

15 TGES 282.

16 花道, lit. "flower road". A bridge through the audience probably developed from the *hashikakari* 橋掛り of the noh stage during the Genroku period. The name stems from the early Edo period, where fans would climb up to give their favorites "flowers" i.e money, presents and letters tied onto branches of bamboo (Hattori 1994: 208–27). Whereas the *hashikakari* was connected to the back stage changing rooms continuing to the side of the stage, the *hanamichi* ran towards the back of the spectators, parallel to the west side *sajiki* boxes. However, during the Kyōhō period, the *hanamichi* connected with the 8th *sajiki* box on the west side and ran on a slightly diagonal angle.

time). Seats further back, or in the *mukō-sajiki*, would be 100 *mon,* and standing room only for separate scenes cost as little as 16 *mon*.[17]

Nevertheless, ticket prices varied according to the general state of the Edo economy and to the popularity of the play.[18] Firstly, fluctuation due to fiscal policies of the bakufu, according to Sekine Shisei's *Theatre Chronicals* 戯場年表 (*Shibai nenpyō*), indicate that in 1654, during the period of rapid economic development and emerging inflation, prices were the same as those 150 year later (132 *mon* for *kiriotoshi* or *doma* seats, 100 *mon* for seats further away from the stage). However, great fluctuations may have occurred due to severe fiscal devaluation of 1714, i.e., *sajiki* boxes dropped to 1,200 *mon* (about 16 silver *monme*), *kiriotoshi* seats to about 64 *mon*, each about half of the *honne* mentioned previously.[19]

Secondly, ticket prices varied with the popularity of a play. A record from 1737 about the immensly successful performance of *The Great Mirror of Ashiya Dōman*[20] 蘆屋道満大内鑑 (*Ashiya Dōman ōuchi kagami*), the farewell-play of Segawa Kikunojō I 瀬川菊之丞 (pen name Rokō 路考, 1693–1749), reveals that the Nakamura Za on the 17th day of the 9th month sold 32 *sajiki* boxes to a total turnover of 16 *ryō*, which means that one box would be about 2 bu (2,000 *mon*), and that 803 *kiriotoshi* tickets were sold for a total of 131,700 *mon* (ca 33 *ryō*), or 164 *mon* per person.[21] Summing up, the total turn over was about 57 *ryō,* the fees from seats other than the *sajiki* boxes amounted to 41 *ryō* and 2,278 *mon*, revealing that more than two-thirds of the turn over was gained by the sale of cheap seats. However, 'cheap' is relative. Hattori claims that visiting the theatres was an expensive past-time; even 164 *mon* was a significant sum to a normal employee, thereby gradually limiting the audience to the social strata of wealthy merchants.[22] During the Genroku era, there had been a great number of big spenders filling up the *sajiki* boxes, but Hara

17 SKZ 2: 35–36.

18 Hattori 1975: 32–34.

19 NSBSS bekkan 1: 339.

20 The play was written by Takeda Izumo and first performed as a puppet play at the Takemoto Za in Osaka in 1734 and the following year as kabuki at the Nakamura Tomijūrō Za. It is based on the legend of the white fox Kuzu no ha 葛の葉 who married Abe Yasuna 安倍保名 and bore the famous *onmyōshi* (yin-yang divinator) Abe no Seimei 安倍晴明 (921–1005) before returning to the Shinoda forest. The play is still performed today.

21 TGES 132.

22 Hattori 1975: 33–34.

Morikazu 原盛和, a mid-18th century contemporary essayist, explains the significance of the recession to the business strategies of the theatres in his essay collection *My Neighbour's Colic* 隣の疝気 (*Tonari no senki*, 1763) as follows:

> There are *sajiki* boxes, however they are rarely profitable. It is currently common to use so-called *hikifuda* to attract audiences to the *kiriotoshi* and the middle seats 中の間 (*naka no ma*), but even this has little effect. The old man might ask what a *hikifuda* is. This is a recent method whereby [theatre managers] circulate cheap tickets of 64 *mon* to attract spectators.[23]

A *hikifuda* 引札 is a flyer generally used to advertise sales. It was first used by the clothes retailer Echigoya 越後屋 (the ancestor of the Mitsukoshi department store-chain) in 1683, but rapidly became a common advertising method for all sorts of merchants.[24] In other words, according to Hara Morikazu, by the 1750s, theatres had difficulties making profit from the expensive *sajiki* boxes and therefore tried to attract audience members by selling seats in the cheap *kiriotoshi* area at half price.

It is indeed difficult to make any definite statement about entrance fees. For example, records in Ihara Seiseien's *Kabuki Chronicles* 歌舞伎年表 (*Kabuki nenpyō*) indicate that in the 4th month of 1783, the play *The Coloured Woodcut of the Old Native Land of Mt. Kagami*[25] 加々見山旧錦絵 (*Kagamiyama kokyō no nishiki e*) was initially unsuccessful when performed at the Morita Za. When it began running, *sajiki* boxes went for only 2 gold *shu* (2 朱: 7 silver *monme*, 2 *bu*, 5 *ri*), but by the 5th month, the price had doubled. At the same time, the *kiriotoshi* went from 64 *mon* to reach a *honne* of 132 *mon*.[26] Thus it

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23 一、扨、桟敷はあれども、銭に成のは稀、切落し、中の間は、近年引札と言事時花、といはせも果ず。彼老人、引札とは何の事じや、ととふ、近き頃、六十四文の安札を廻し、入を引く仕かた. EJ 5: 288.

24 Nakada 1999: 6.

25 The play was first performed as a puppet play at the Geki Za in Edo in January 1782. The plot is based on two real incidents. The first took place at the Edo estate of *Matsudaira Suō no Kami* 松平周防守 in 1724. The highest ranking lady in waiting hit the second highest attendant with her *zōri* sandals, which resulted in her committing suicide. The attendant was however avenged by her faithful servant, a rare case of an all-female vendetta. The second incident took place in the late 1740s when Ōtsuki Denzō 大槻伝蔵, a retainer of the Kaga 加賀 domain, plotted to kill lord Maeda Yoshinori 前田吉徳 and make his own son heir to the domain. These two stories were woven together into an intricate plot, and there is even a 'part two' of the play (*The Resurrection of Iwafuji at Mt. Kagami* 加賀見山再岩藤 *Kagami Yama gonichi no Iwafuji*), both still performed (Matsui 1996: 402).

26 KN 3: 506–7.

can be concluded that the actual price varied greatly, even during one and the same play.

In terms of total turnover during this period, a record of 4,221 *ryō* was cashed in during the play *The Soga Brothers' Fan of Blessed Direction* 扇恵方曽我 (*Suehiro ehō Soga*) staged at the Nakamura Za from the 1st month of 1729. This is incidentally the play in which Danjūrō II first staged the monumentally popular scene *Gorō Sharpening the Arrows* 矢の根五郎 (*Ya no ne Gorō*). According to Sekine Shisei, who still had access to the lost accounting books of the Edo theatres, this was a box office record for the period between the end of the Shōtoku and the Hōreki eras (1714–64).[27] However, the play ran for 113 days with 5 days off, resulting in a daily average of no more than 38 *ryō* per day. Sekine reasoned that a theatre needed an average of at least 30 *ryō* a day to cover expenses, and that most plays did not yield anything close to that amount.[28]

In sum, Edo period kabuki theatres reduced prices to assure sufficient audience attendance, but in doing so, they also failed to earn the turn over necessary to make ends meet. In the following, the main reason for the high expenses, namely actors' wages, will be scrutinized.

Actors' Wages

Actors were entrepreneurs in their own right, and were not always necessarily dependent upon, or loyal to, their employers.

Records included in the *Documents of the Zenrin Ji Temple* 禅林寺文書 (*Zenrin Ji monjo*) describing *kanjin* 勧進[29] performances staged to raise money, when exhibiting temple artefacts, show that the event of the 26th day of the 3rd month 1339 made a total turnover of 139,460 *mon* (101,000 *mon* from the

27 TGES: 132–33.

28 Ibidem.

29 Exhibitions of temple artefacts or performances staged at the temples in order to raise money. The *kanjin* performances began as early as the Heian period, and became widespread during the Warring States period. During the early modern period, the events developed into highly popular festivals and markets. The development of the performing stage art is closely linked to these events (Ogasawara 1992: 12–21). For example the Danjūrō family always staged performances of the Fudō Myōjin 不動明神 during the Narita San Shinshō Ji 成田山新勝寺 Temple's *kanjin* event in Edo, thus raising money both for the temple and the theatre. This is also the reason why the *yagō* 屋号 (acting house name) of the Danjūrō family is Naritaya (Hattori 2002: 24–25).

sajiki boxes, 38,460 *mon* from the lower seats). From this total sum, the *sarugaku* 猿楽[30] performers received 50,000 *mon* in wages, an additional 7,500 *mon* for *shukō* 酒肴 (lit. sake and fish). In other words, actors were paid more than one-third of the total turnover. As costs for preparing the *sajiki* boxes (8,330 *mon*) and for wood and material (4,620 *mon*) are listed separately, we can assume that the 50,000 *mon* were devoted to payment for the performance.[31]

These sums do not necessarily clash with the notion that stage performers belonged to a shunned social group called the *kawaramono* 河原者, living outside society on the riverbeds, but they do show the necessity of differentiating various groups of performers. Researchers focusing on the developing urbanity and the performing arts during medieval times, such as Ogasawara Kyōko and Yamaji Kyōzō, argue that the *kawaramono* clans obtained the right to manage *kanjin* and other performances because they were often staged at the riverbanks and because the clan members were supposed to have powers to transcend into the world of the dead and therefore could function as spiritual guides.[32]

Yamaji further argues that in some cases the main task for members of *kawaramono* clans was to build and manage the stages on which the performances were held, whereas the performers themselves could have had a different social status.[33] In the case of kabuki, even further differentiation occurs. Before kabuki became established as a performing art, unconventional and flamboyant people called *kabuki mono* かぶき者 emerged in Kyoto at the end of the 16th century. The *kabuki mono* were men and women from every social stratum appearing in dashing fashion and displaying a taste for exotic and extravagant behavior, much of it revolving around wild dancing and singing to shamisen music in the pleasure quarters.

The rebellious image of these *kabuki mono* was first exhibited in a stage performance by the legendary Okuni お国, who cross-dressed as a male *kabuki mono* and flirted with a prostitute – played by a male actor – on stage. In

30 Also 申楽 or 散楽, a performing art originating from the Heian era, specializing on mimicry and humorous skits and often performed during the evening of sumō 相撲 and kagura 神楽 events. From the early Kamakura era, professional theatre companies performing at temple festivals added mystic rituals to the agenda, and the name lived on as a second name for noh or kyōgen perfomances up until the Meiji era.

31 ZM: 26th 3rd month Rekiō 2 / Gen'en 4 [1339].

32 Ogasawara 1992: 88–109; Yamaji 2010 (1): 9–26.

33 Yamaji 2010 (1): 9–26.

contemporary sources like *Collection of Things Seen and Heard during the Keichō Period* 慶長見聞集 (*Keichō kenmon shū*) Okuni is claimed to have been the daughter of Omura San'emon[34] 小村三右衛門 and a *miko* 巫女 or *yūjo* 遊女[35] from Izumo 出雲.[36] While her social status is ambiguous, her alleged partner Nagoya Sanzaburō 名古屋山三郎 (1572/76–1603) was, according to existing sources, a notable *kabuki mono*, as well as a samurai. It is unclear if Okuni and Sanzaburō did actually perform together, but the popular stories about them show that neither the *kabuki mono* nor the kabuki performers were considered to be members of the clans of outcasts when kabuki was created.

In the early Edo period, the third shogun Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604–51) invited kabuki actors to the Edo castle and rewarded them with 100,000 *mon,* at the time equivalent to 25 *ryō*.[37] As illustration, according to the *Edo Encyclopedia of Prices* 江戸物価事典 (*Edo bukka jiten*), a female servant earned between 2 *bu* and 3 *ryō* a year, a shop assistant between 3 and 5 *ryō* by the mid-Edo period.[38]

Performing for the shōgun was obviously rewarding, and actors called to the estates of various daimyo were also paid handsomely. For example, the household records of the Edo estate of the daimyo of the Hirosaki domain 弘前藩 (Aomori Prefecture), show that the actors were paid between 1 *ryō* and 1 *bu* each for the performance on the 11th day of the 3rd month 1680.[39]

Considering actors' wages at the theatres, the lord of the Murakami domain 村上藩 (Niigata Prefecture) Matsudaira Naonori 松平直矩 (1642–95) wrote in his diary *Matsudaira Yamato no kami nikki* 松平大和守日記 on the 11th day of the 10th month 1671 that the actors, while receiving a yearly wage, often rested for more than 20 days a month, thus forcing the *zamoto* to change the payment system so that actors would be paid 1 *ryō* per day they actually

34 Possibly Komura San'emon. The reading of his name has not been verified.

35 Crudely translated as shrine maid and prostitute. These professions are not necessarily contradictory. 遊女 (lit. "playful woman") can also be read *asobime*. The professional title appears already in the *Manyō shū* 万葉集, and is generally considered to stem from a branch of *miko*, who specialized in the performing arts of singing, dancing and performing with dolls. These *miko* are defined by some scholars as belonging to the social outcasts, but very little is known about them.

36 ES 2: 143–45.

37 TGES 55.

38 Ono 1979: 213–15.

39 Takei: 11th day 3rd month Enpō 8 [1680].

performed.[40] Thus it can be concluded that they were already renumerated extremely well, at this time.

The actor's review *Old Tales Overheard in Naniwa* 難波立聞昔語 (*Naniwa tachigiki mukashi banashi*) states that, in 1686, theatres in the Kansai area spent from 600 to 700 *ryō* in total on the actors and shows that this was enough money for the lead actors to keep more than one townhouse each.[41]

These records interestingly show that actors did indeed live in townhouses already before the court verdict in 1708, which legislated that they were not under the jurisdiction of the *eta* 穢多 clan.[42] The kabuki actors' social status was ambivalent for some time. It is believed that they avoided being classified as *eta* because they were under the jurisdiction of the theatres' landowners and consequently had to live in the theatre quarters at first. After the verdict in 1708, kabuki actors obtained rights to be registered under the jurisdiction of other town quarters as well, rent land and open their own shops, hence the introduction of the *yagō* 屋号 (shop name) around this time. However, according to the *Kabuki Chronicles*, Danjūrō I took on the *yagō* Naritaya on the occasion of his visit to the Narita Shinshō Ji Temple in 1697. Also, just as the actor's review shows that actors did have houses before 1708, the collection of essays *My Garment* 我衣 (*Wa ga koromo*) written by mid-Edo contemporary Katō Genki 加藤玄亀, features a tale of the kabuki actor Nakamura Kazuma 中村数馬, who opened a perfumed oil shop in the Nihonbashi quarters in the 1660s. Thus, official rules of jurisdiction were in reality perhaps more flexible.[43]

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40 NSBSS 12: 489.

41 KHS 1: 197–215.

42 The case is described in detail in *The Victory Fan* 勝扇子 (*Kachi ōgi*, 1708) in NSBSS 14: 439–57) compiled by Ichikawa Danjūrō II. As a general outline of the case, the leader of the *eta* clan in Edo, Danzaemon 弾左衛門, sued the travelling *karakuri* からくり (mechanical puppets and gadgets) theatre company of Kobayashi Shinsuke 小林新介, who came from Kyoto to perform in Edo and the Anbō (Chiba) domain for refusing to pay a part of the revenue to the clan. Morita Yoshinori claims in the preface of the edition of the *The Victory Fan* that the right of the *etakashira* to control the theatre performances stems from the 11th century. However, according to Yamaji (2010 (2): 335) the *etakashira*'s claim to his right to levy a tax of 10% on the entrance fees was first acknowledged as late as 1641, and was not a given right and theatre companies often refused it. In 1708, the magistrate decided in favour of the travelling theatre company, and permanent theatres in Edo greeted this verdict as an acknowledgement of their townsmen rights.

43 EJ 1: 185–86.

According to *My Garment*, Danjūrō I (1660–1704) was the top earner with a yearly contract of 500 *ryō* during the Genroku period.[44] The *onnagata* 女方 actor Yoshizawa Ayame I 芳沢あやめ (1673–1729) was the first to receive 1,000 *ryō* during the Shōtoku era, and Danjūrō II followed him into the famous *senryō yakusha* 千両役者 category in 1721. However, these records claim that Danjūrō II received this wage from the Nakamura Za at a time when we know from the actors' reviews that he actually was working at the Morita Za. The *Kabuki Chronicles* again state that it was the Morita Za, which paid the 1,000 *ryō*, but that henceforth all three Edo theatres agreed on rewarding Danjūrō that sum, plus a summer holiday in the 6th month every year.[45] Still, Sekine Shisei includes a contract for a yearly wage of "only" 700 *ryō* from the Nakamura Za signed in the 10th month 1733 in his collections – the contract indicates that it was binding for the working year 1734.[46] Danjūrō II's diary reveals, however, that he was acting at the Ichimura Za. This demonstrates that documentation is inconsistent and that very little is known about Danjūrō II's famous *senryō yakusha* status.

In the *Talks on the Boat to the Theatre* 芝居乗合話 (*Shibai noriai banashi*, 1801 in 新群書類), playwright Nakamura Jūsuke II 中村重助 (1749–1803), who was active during the Kansei era, states in his analysis of theatre management at the time that it was indeed possible for an actor in the position of *zagashira* 座頭 (head of the actors) to receive this kind of money, but that:

> Generally actors are such creatures that – as they make a living by selling their faces – pretend that they are making money they really are not, because it makes them appear better, and therefore there are many rumours.[47]

Actors often exaggerated their wages to appear more popular, and this makes it very difficult to verify the legends of the *senryō yakusha*. However, in the *Sadoshima Diary* 佐渡島日記 (*Sadoshima nikki*), the diary of Sadoshima Chōgorō 佐渡島長五郎 (1700–57, *zamoto* of the Sadoshima Za), evidence shows that when Danjūrō II was called to Osaka in 1741, he received a wage of 2,000 *ryō*, a previously unheard of sum.[48]

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44 EJ 1: 167.

45 KN 2: 6.

46 TGES 128.

47 一体役者といふものは、顔を売る渡世ゆへ、とらぬ金も取よふに、人に聞ゆるかたよろしき故、是には種々の口伝あらん. SGR 3: 142.

48 NKBT 98: 373.

The continued inflation of wages became the main reason for the theatres' debts. While businesses certainly had to pay rent and other everyday expenses, Hattori shows, based on Nakamura Jūsuke's calculations, that 85% of the expenses they faced in the early 19th century consisted of the wages paid to the actors.[49] Further, Sekine Shisei confirms that from the 1760s onwards, in addition to the general laxity of wage control, dress expenses and banquets for the actors were also paid for by the theatres.[50]

In order to operate a viable economic system based on cumulative deficiency, benevolent investors were vital, and therefore they will be considered next.

The Investors

The investors were variously referred to as *kanemoto* 金元 (本), *kinshu* 金主 or *ginshu* 銀主, according to the time and place. Hattori Yukio lists about 20 potential investors, all with very different agendas.[51] However, despite the pivotal position of investors in the economy of the theatres, documentation about their identity and occupation is almost nonexistent. According to Hattori, many investors exploited their association with theatres to promote themselves rather than the investment itself as a business opportunity.[52] By appearing as generous and carefree benefactors, they sought to make a name for themselves as urban legends, and thus attract admiration from high-ranking courtesans and actors alike. This image of the investors is documented in fiction, in which the *kanemoto* appear as big spenders in the licensed quarters. For example, Ihara Saikaku's 井原西鶴 (1642–93) novels *Five Women who Loved Love* 好色五人女 (*Kōshoku gonin onna*, 1686) and *The Life of an Amorous Woman* 好色一代女 (*Kōshoku ichidai onna*, 1686) describe such adventures.[53]

Here, two investors of the late Kyōhō era whom Hattori has omitted, and who are radically different from Saikaku's romantic figures are noteworthy. They are presented by Baba Bunkō 馬場文耕 (1715/18–1758) in *Gossip from the Exercise Field* 武野俗談 (*Buya zokudan*),[54] and though there is probably

49 Hattori 1974: 159.

50 TGES 132.

51 Hattori 1974: 157– 58.

52 Ibidem.

53 SSZ 1: 492–94, 524–28.

54 YDB 86: 373–75, 418–20.

a certain amount of exaggeration in Bunkō's tales, the investors he mentions also appear in Danjūrō II's diary. Thus, by looking at the tales and the records

First, a woman called Take no Ko Baba 竹の子婆 (lit. "Old Lady Bamboo Sprout") – her real name is not known, but according to Bunkō, she was originally a housekeeper for Nakamura Jūsuke I 中村重助 (1698–1755), a front clerk and playwright at the Nakamura Za. By tricking a temple priest at a funeral in Asakusa, she obtained 10 *ryō* as starting capital and opened up brothels for *bikuni* 比丘尼 (lay-nun) and *kagema* 陰間 (young boy) prostitutes, operating outside the licensed quarters of Yoshiwara. She got her nickname 'Old Lady Bamboo Sprout' from an incident in which she beat one of her *kagema* boys so badly he died, but lied that the boy had died from food poisoning from bamboo sprouts and got away with it. According to Bunkō she was very pleased with her own cleverness. Further, when a customer of her *bikuni* died suddenly during the night and the relatives were too ashamed to come and claim the money he had in his pockets, she got a hold of another 20 *ryō*. She engaged in the business of selling the clothes of dead people second-hand, and by the mid-Kyōhō era, successfully ran her own chain of stores. According to Bunkō, she reached a state where "money breeds money"[55] and accumulated substantial wealth. As she and Jūsuke were on good terms, she agreed to invest in the Nakamura Za. However, on the 23rd day of the 10th month 1734, Danjūrō II writes:

> That Kanzaburō and Jūsuke were put into ropes by the magistrate was due to Take no Ko's law suit over money.[56]

Both the *zamoto* of the Nakamura Za, Nakamura Kanzaburō VI 中村勘三郎 (1688–1758) and the front clerk Nakamura Jūsuke were arrested on the claims of a *kanekuji* 金公事 – a complaint over a non-guaranteed debt. Typically, the magistrate recommended that parties involved in *kanekuji* matters should sort it out themselves and occasionally even refused to handle them.[57] We can assume that the forcible arrest of Kanzaburō and Jūsuke indicates that Take no Ko Baba's claim must have been for substantial sums. Nevertheless, the Nakamura Za continued its business as usual, suggesting that the parties came to a satisfactory agreement. The contents of the agreement are not known, but

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55 それより右金子にて芝居芸子、舞台子、陰間などを少々抱へ、堺町勘三郎座へ貸金などをはじめ、十助世話にて出しけるが段々金が金を生んで、後は夥し。

56 此日、勘三郎十助御番所ニテナワカヽリシヨシ、竹ノ子ガ公事金の事也。

57 Okazaki 1999: 71–84.

Bunkō calls the *zamoto* Nakamura Kanzaburō VIII, active in the 1750's, Take no Ko Baba's *kobun* (子分, minion), so she must have continued to have significant influence on the management of the Nakamura Za for at least another 20 years. Take no Ko Baba's daughter took over the role as investor when her mother died in 1756, but it is not known when the relationship between Take no Ko Baba's enterprise and the Nakamura Za ended.[58]

At the same time, Emura Shōsuke 江村庄助(介) from the Shin-Osaka quarter was acting as investor for the Ichimura Za.[59] In his youth, his mother supported him and his siblings, acting as a begging nun, and he earned tips by cleaning backstage and running errands at the Ichimura Za, generally sporting the nickname Shinbochii Shōsuke 新発意庄介, or Shōsuke, the new monk. However, his sister went into the service of Sanuki domain 讃岐藩 (Kagawa Prefecture), and became both the official and favorite mistress of the lord himself. It is impossible to verify whether this is an exaggeration of Bunkō's imagination or not, but either way, the family made a fortune, for when Shōsuke gave the Ichimura Za a helping hand, he was then greeted as Goseijin Shōsuke 御聖人庄介 – Saint Shōsuke.

In *The Persimmon Covers*, on the 13th day of the 5th month 1734, Shōsuke was presented with a letter from the actor Arashi San'emon III 三代目嵐三右衛門 (pen name Banko 番虎, 1697–1754) addressed to Danjūrō. San'emon had been summoned from Kyoto that year, but his health was ailing and he had received very bad reviews. In the letter San'emon pleaded for renewed stage time. Further, in the record from the 6th day of the 10th month, Shōsuke came with the payment for the 9th month, apologizing to Danjūrō for the delay.

Take no Ko Baba and Shōsuke were born into the theatre milieu, and had their own businesses nearby. They could, by investing in the theatres, participate in the management of their natural surroundings and benefit from the patronage of theatre visitors in their own establishments. As theatres needed significant amounts of capital to cover their structural deficits, multiple investors were often enlisted. For example, in the magistrate records from 1796, 99 separate investors are listed for Nakamura Za during the time of the great Kansei crisis (1789–1801), when all three licensed theatres in Edo applied for *kyūza* simultaneously.[60]

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58 YDB 86: 418–20.

59 YDB 86: 373–75.

60 TGES: 279–80. Investors were divided into three groups according to how much they had invested: 12 big investors 大之分金主 (*dai no bun kinshu*) were to be re-paid 70 gold *ryō*

Bunkō was very skeptical as to why anybody in their right mind would risk their capital to support the theatres. Certainly, as Hattori Yukio argues, there were wealthy merchants who, without actually intending to make any profit, invested for the sake of promoting themselves, or because they were fans of a particular actor.

However, apart from cash being pumped into theatres and then drained by the actors, various other sources of capital flowed into the theatres. Teahouses affiliated with them and other various merchants joined the theatres and actors with the common purpose of profiting from the amusement quarter visitors. Thus, it can be assumed that everyone involved had an interest in keeping the shows running – and therefore businessmen (and women) within the system invested carefully, calculating potential risks and profits.

Danjūrō II was one of the chief managers of the world of kabuki, and in the following, his records on day-to-day back-stage management at the Ichimura Za will be analyzed.

Danjūrō II the Manager

During autumn 1734, the bon play *The Original Imagawa Letter* 根源今川状 (*Kongen Imagawa jō*) was staged at the Ichimura Za. No coherent script survives, but Danjūrō II's diary indicates that it was written by Tsuuchi Jihei II 津打治兵衛 (pen name Eishi 英子, 1679–1760), performed for more than 87 days, and was on the agenda for more than 120 days in total, including the preparation time.

The "Imagawa letter" in the title refers to a letter of instruction sent by the lord of the Suruga 駿河 domain (Shizuoka Prefecture), Imagawa Ryōshun 今川了俊 (1326–?) to his adopted son (and younger brother) Nakaaki 仲秋 in 1412. The letter formed the basis for a classical textbook for letter-writing, used at the *terakoya* schools during the Edo period and also influenced a whole genre of educational books. Plays with Imagawa in the title refer to this letter, but the temporal setting and plot vary. The first records of a play referring to this letter (according to the *Kabuki Chronicles*) show that it was performed in 1650 at

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2 *bu* and 6 silver *monme* a year, a total of 350 *ryō* over 5 years, 30 middle investors 中之分金主 (*chū no bun kinshu*) were to be re-paid 26 *ryō* a year, 300 *ryō* in 5 years and 57 small investors 小之分金主 (*shō no bun kinshu*) were to be re-paid 150 *ryō* during the following year only.

one of the 3rd shogun Iemitsu's kabuki events at the Edo castle.[61] The content of Jihei II's *The Original Imagawa Letter* can be traced to a *jōruri* performance of *The Tale of Imagawa* 今川物語 (*Imagawa monogatari*) at the Shijō Kawara theatre quarters to celebrate the 65th birthday of the retired Emperor Go-Mizunoo 後水尾天皇 (1596–1680) at the 4th day of the 6th month 1662.[62] Further, the puppet play *Imagawa Ryōshun* 今川了俊, written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon was performed at the Takemoto Za 竹本座 in Osaka in 1687. In Jihei II's play, Imagawa Nakaaki was a central figure, but the plot was mainly concerned with the downfall of warlord Minamoto no Yorikane 源頼兼 – who incidentally lived 300 years before Nakaaki.

According to the picture script book[63] printed on the occasion of the performance, *zamoto* Ichimura Uzaemon VIII 市村羽左衛門 (pen name Kakō 何江, 1698–1762) played Nagoya Sanzaburō. From the remaining line books[64] we know that Danjūrō III played Imagawa Nakaaki in the first and second acts,[65] and Yamamoto Kansuke in the third.[66] The key scenes were performed by Danjūrō II in one of his favorite roles for bon plays, Fuwa Banzaemon 不破伴左衛門 and Ōtani Hiroji I 大谷広次 (pen-name Jūchō, 十町(丁), 1696–1747) playing both Banzaemon's servant and Minamoto no Yorikane. Today, Nagoya Sanzaburo and Fuwa Banzaemon are still iconic characters in kabuki,

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61 KN 1: 61.

62 KMK: 4th day 6th month Kanbun 2 [1662].

63 狂言(絵)本 *kyōgen* (*e*) *hon*. Picture script books depict key scenes from the whole play and list the actors. They were commonly printed from ca. 1710 onwards (Akama 1998: 22–23). The script book for *The Original Imagawa Letters* is included in *Script Books from the Spring of the Year of the Tiger Kyōhō 19* 享保十九甲寅年春狂言本*, Kyōhō jūkyū ki no e toradoshi haru kyōgen bon*, Boston Museum of Fine Arts collection.

64 せりふ正本 *serifu shōhon*. Printed flyers with especially popular lines, usually 2–4 pages with the actor's portrait on the first page. Publishers like Nakajimaya, Igaya, Izumiya and Iseya printed a great number of these flyers from ca. 1710 onwards. It is generally considered that it was Danjūrō II's highly popular line of the Moxa peddler, enacted at the Yamamura Za in the 7th month of 1710 which triggered the production of these flyers (Akama 1998: 12–15).

65 *The Line of Many Books and Writings* 書物つくしせりふ (*Shomotsu tsukushi serifu*, 1734), *Linebook Collection* 三座せりふよせ (*Sanza serifuyose*) in Cambridge University Library archives (CUL).

66 *The Chasing Line of Two Brave Warriors* 勇士揃かけ合せりふ (*Yushi soroe kakeai serifu*) and *The Chasing Line of Father and Son Advising on Military Procedures* 父子軍談かけ合せりふ (*Fushi gundan kakeai serifu*), CUL.

and the latter is included in the *Kabuki jūhachi ban* list, but neither has any connection to the Imagawa story.

Danjūrō II was involved in the production of this play from the beginning. On the 13th day of the 6th month Danjūrō II wrote:

> Bairi 梅里 and Kodō 古洞 come from Edo. The former carries a message about San'emon, asking whether to remove him from the billboards for the bon play. And Kodō raised [the question] of Eishi with regard to the Kyōgen world. Eishi wants to know whether "Imagawa", "Princess Chūjō", or "Young Atsumori" [should be put on stage]. I reply that "Imagawa" probably would be good.[67]

At this time, Danjūrō II was spending his summer holiday at his villa in Meguro, and two messengers from Edo arrived, carrying messages from the *zamoto* and the lead playwright. The message from Jihei II requested Danjūrō II's opinion as to what the "world"[68] should be in the coming bon play, and Danjūrō chose the "Imagawa" plot.

Then, on the 19th day of the same month, when Danjūrō was in Edo following the sudden death of the *zamoto* at the Morita Za, Kodō came to the Ichikawa house to ask for advice on behalf of the playwright once more. The next day Danjūrō II and Hiroji met backstage of the Ichimura Za to discuss the play.

On the 6th day of the 7th month, two messengers from the Ichimura Za arrived in Meguro to tell Danjūrō there would be a meeting about the play. Consequently, Danjūrō moved back to Edo and took part in the negotiations. A week later, on the 15th day of the 7th month, the day of the beginning of bon festivities, *The Original Imagawa Letter* premiered.

Due to sweltering heat, the play did not attract much audience attention until the 26th day when the *tsume* 詰め (grand finale) scene was added to the second act and the play suddenly became a hit.[69] There was a meeting concern-

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67 江戸ヨリ梅里、古洞二人来ル、右ハ三右衛門コト、七月ヨリ番付ノ名ヌグヒ候コト相談、古洞ハ又狂言世界ノコト、英子ヨリ口上、今川カ中将姫カ小アツモリカト、予返事ニ今川ヨカルベシト云。

68 狂言世界 *kyōgen sekai*. A "world" is a frame within which the play is conducted, providing a (often wildly inaccurate) historical context and a set of key figures and basic plot motifs.

69 Kabuki plays at this time were structured loosely around a time plot, usually with three or four acts scheduled. Each act would run for 1–2 weeks, depending on its popularity and be divided into a general part and a final act (*tsume*), which had an independent running time (Akama 1998: 24). The acts did not necessarily form a coherent story, but were independent sets in themselves. The content of the acts changed slightly every day according to the actor's mood and the response of the audience, and Danjūrō II often comments on the play

ing the third act on the evening of 6th day of the 8th month, but as the second act continued to attract audiences for two more weeks, the dress rehearsal for the third act did not happen until the evening of the 18th day of the 8th month. The premiere was the following day, and the third act was also a hit for two full weeks. On the 26th day of the 8th month, rehearsals for the *tsume* of the third act were conducted and it was put on stage on the 27th. However, this time audience reaction was not favorable, thus forcing Danjūrō and Hiroji to make adjustments the following morning in order to ensure continued success.

With the play's popularity, on the 18th day of the 9th month, *zamoto* Uzaemon and the teahouses in the Fukiya quarters begged Danjūrō to prolong the show. Accordingly, he needed to add a new twist to the story, and Danjūrō wrote the new script together with the assistant writer Chinshō 椿昌 overnight between the 20th and 21st day of the 9th month. According to Ihara Seiseien, Chinshō was probably a minor playwright at the Ichimura Za.[70] In Danjūrō's diary, Chinshō also seems to function as his personal secretary. On the 22nd day there were night rehearsals, on the 25th a dress rehearsal and on the 26th the new premiere was a great triumph. *The Persimmon Cover* does not reveal the exact date when the play ended, but it was probably ongoing until around the 14th day of the 10th month.

Managing the Actors

Nakamura Jūsuke II defines the *zagashira* as the lead actor holding responsibility for other actors, and the representative who has the right to participate in meetings between the theatre owner, playwrights and clerks.[71] The *zagashira* could function as spokesman, but specific duties were not defined and the extent of influence was a matter of personal authority. As Danjūrō II was acting as *zagashira* at the Ichimura Za in 1734, the diary records prominently feature his boss, the *zamoto* Ichimura Uzaemon VIII, the lead playwrights Tsuuchi Jihei II and Eda Yaichi 江田弥市 (pen name Fuhaku 冨百), the previously mentioned investor Emura Shōsuke, his fellow actors and various theatre clerks.

"lasting long into the night" or "finishing early". Thus, the time needed for the performance varied each day.

70 Ihara 1917: in the introduction to his copy of *The Persimmon Covers*. However, Chinshō's real name is not known.

71 SGR 3: 1906: 148–49.

One of the many tasks that Danjūrō II was involved in was the management of the other actors.

The case of Arashi San'emon will be considered first. As previously mentioned, records of the 13th day of the 5th month show that investor Shōsuke came to Danjūrō carrying a letter asking for stage time from San'emon. Arashi San'emon III had been summoned from Kyoto that year, but he had been ill beginning with the *kaomise* 顔見世[72] play in the 11th month. He first appeared in front of the Edo audience morally supported by Danjūrō II on the 6th day of the 1st month. In the beginning he received positive reviews, but by the 3rd month he fell ill again and Danjūrō wrote:

> [We] announced the title [of the new play] on the 11th day of the 3rd month: *Suehiro Sumidagawa*; on the next day, the 12th, [we] put *Inviting Five Men* マネキ五人男 (*Maneki gonin otoko*) on the billboard. The reviews were very good, but just as the billboards were put up, San'emon got ill again, and – worse – we had to postpone the premiere from the 15th to the 16th [day], change the play and replace San'emon with Hangorō. San'emon's reputation has declined to an extent previously unheard of. He is the laughing stock of both his peers and people in the streets, and even the name of his grandfather and father is tainted. Soon we will have to do something to stop this laughter. These are the kind of things you must bear in mind as an actor.[73]

The premiere date for the act of *The Inviting Five Men*[74] had to be changed due to San'emon's failing health, and he was ridiculed by the whole town. As mentioned, two months later, on the 13th day of the 5th month, *kanemoto*

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72 顔見世狂言 *kaomise kyōgen*, the play where all the actors who had a contract for the following year appear on stage, marks the beginning of a business year. During the Kyōhō period, the *kaomise* was staged during the 11th month in Edo, and the 12th month in Kansai.

73 三月十一日ニ名題出ス。スヱヒロ隅田川、翌十二日、マネキ五人男ノカンバン出ス。評判大キニヨシ所ニカンバンダスト三右衛門又病気、散々ニテ十五日ノ初日十六日延引狂言立替へ、三右衛門替半五郎ニ直シ十六日ヨリ初日出ス。三右衛門ハ前代未聞芸名賀ナキ役者也。仲間見物トモニ散々ノ評判江戸中ノ笑草、祖父親迄ノ名ヲ下シ、扨々笑止成事トモ也。役者タルベキ者心得ベキ事也。

74 The theme of five men appears both in puppet and kabuki plays and refers to a famous band of street fighters led by Karigane Bunshichi 雁金文七, An no Heibei 庵平兵衛, Hotei Ichiemon 布袋市右衛門, Gokuin Sen'emon 極印千右衛門 and Kaminari Shōkurō 神鳴庄九郎. They were executed on the 26th day of the 8th month 1702 in Osaka. These characters first appeared in a puppet play the following month in Osaka at the Okamoto Bunya Za 岡本文弥座 and later the same autumn also as kabuki at the Matsumoto Nazaemon Za 松本名左衛門座. They first appeared in Edo at the Nakamura Za in 1717 in the play *The Soga Brothers Rule the City Streets* 街道一棟上曾我 (*Kaidō ichimune age Soga*, KJ). Danjūrō II played Soga Gorō disguised as Karigane Bunshichi at this time (KN 1: 472). Details about

Shōsuke came bearing a letter from San'emon asking for stage time due to his improved health. However, just a month later, Danjūrō agreed with Uzaemon to erase San'emon from the billboards of the bon play. San'emon left Edo secretly during the night of the 24th day of the 7th month, a night with heavy rain, and Danjūrō lamented San'emon's bad luck.

Danjūrō II was a prominent figure in the world of kabuki and was frequently asked for advice by *zamoto* Uzaemon VIII, who was 10 years his junior. Another concrete example of how Danjūrō was involved in the process of hiring and firing at the Ichimura Za, is given in the records from the 17th day of the 9th month 1734:

> Shinkatsu came to me backstage and asked me to take care of his contract (身上 *shinshō*) [for next year]. I immediately told Kakō [about this].[75]

Hayakawa Shinkatsu 早川新勝 (?–1754) was an *onnagata* actor active from about the 1720s, with a reputation for being a skilled shamisen player and good singer, and was already acting at the Ichimura Za. On the 27th day of the same month Danjūrō II continued:

> Shinkatsu was accompanied by Jūshirō to [my] mansion to thank me for my efforts in getting their contracts through.[76]

Apparently, Danjūrō's recommendations helped Shinkatsu and the young *kataki yaku* 敵役[77] actor Miyazaki Jūshirō II 宮崎十四郎 (1708–69), also acting at Ichimura Za, to secure their contracts for the coming year.

On the 25th of the 9th month, another case was brought before Danjūrō and Hiroji, the other lead actor at Ichimura Za, by the clerk responsible for managing the changing rooms. He asked them to put in a good word for the *onnagata* actor Sodesaki Miwano 袖崎三輪野 (1690–1736). Miwano had been performing at the Nakamura Za in 1732, but disappeared from the actors' reviews for the following two years. In 1735 he appeared not at the Ichimura Za stage, but at the newly opened Kawarasaki Za, only to pass away the following year. It

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the performance in 1734 are not known, but it is quite likely that Danjūrō again played Bunshichi.

75 新カツ身上ヲ予ニ楽ヤニテ頼ム、早速、何江へ云。

76 又座敷へハ、新勝ヲ十四郎同道シ来ル。是ハ身上シユビヨク予ガ世話ニテ埒明キ候礼也。

77 Kabuki actor specializing in acting the role of the "enemy".

is possible that his health was weak already in 1734, and that this was why Danjūrō and Hiroji did not recommend him.

When all the contracts for the following year had been signed, on the 11th day of the 10th month 1734, Danjūrō wrote:

> Tonight Kikunojō and Sōsaburō came to pay congratulatory gifts (祝儀 *shūgi*) for the *kaomise* play.[78]

Segawa Kikunojō I was the most popular *onnagata* actor in Edo at the time and had been performing at the Nakamura Za in 1734 but transferred to Ichimura Za in 1735. Ichikawa Sōsaburō 市川宗三郎 (1687–1752), however, was performing at the Ichimura Za during both years, and from this record it is clear that the actors were obliged to pay congratulatory gifts not only to the *zamoto* Uzaemon VIII but also to the *zagashira* Danjūrō II, indicating his central role as a manager of the other actors.

Managing the Playwrights

Danjūrō II also took an active role in the management of playwrights and staging of the plays. As mentioned above, on the 13th day of the 6th month, Danjūrō was asked by the lead playwright Tsuuchi Jihei II what scenario should be used in the coming bon play, and Danjūrō II suggested the Imagawa plot. From the premiere on the 15th day of the 7th month up until the beginning of the second act, *The Original Imagawa Letter* did not achieve much success, but then Danjūrō and his son's double act achieved sudden acclaim on the 2nd day of the 8th month.

Considering the relationship between Jihei and Danjūrō, we know from the *Kabuki Chronicles* that their cooperation was responsible for huge successes such as *The Flower Boat of the Lovingly Protected Cherry Blossoms* 花屋形愛護桜 (*Hana yakata aigo sakura*) where Hanakawado Sukeroku 花川戸助六 was first enacted at the Yamamura Za in 1713.[79] But from Nakamura Jūsuke II's tales, we know that when Danjūrō transferred to Ichimura Za in 1732, he required Jihei's script for the *kaomise* play that year to be re-written three times.[80] In the *The Persimmon Cover*, Jihei as a rule, conferred with Danjūrō

78 此夜、菊之丞、宗三郎、顔見世ノ祝義ニ来ル。

79 KN 1: 420.

80 SGR 3: 148.

using his assistant Kodō as a go-between, indicating that the relationship between the two was not especially cordial at the time.

Perhaps this tension led to Jihei secretly transferring to Nakamura Za at the beginning of the 9th month of 1734. On the night before the transfer, this information was entrusted to Danjūrō by Chinshō. The next day, when it had been officially discovered that Jihei was gone, an emergency meeting of the key Ichimura Za staff was held. The details of the meeting are not known, but the core staff spent the next two weeks negotiating for the playwright Eda Yaichi to be transferred from the Nakamura Za to the Ichimura Za. On the 7th a fee of 5 *ryō* was paid, and the contract was signed on the 16th.

If we look at Danjūrō II's records concerning his relationship to the new playwright Yaichi, the first record we have is from the evening of the 3rd day of the 10th month. It describes how Yaichi brought the layout for the actors' flyer 役者付 (*yakushazuke*[81]) and two days later, Danjūrō invited Yaichi and the two assistant writers Chinshō and Suihei 水平 for insider consultations on the *kaomise* scenario. This time Danjūrō was satisfied with the plot, and three days later, they met with Hiroji and Uzaemon and discussed it officially. Records indicate that, on the 20th, Danjūrō ate *chazuke* 茶漬け (green tea over rice) with Yaichi and yet another assistant writer called Tobun 兎文[82], discussing the play.

Danjūrō II liked to design the plays he starred in himself, and often wrote his own lines. Therefore a good working relationship with the playwrights was likely essential to him.

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81 Commonly 役者番付 *yakusha banzuke* were printed when the line-up for a show was decided and advertised the lead actors. According to Nakamura Jūsuke II (SGR 3: 124–26), before the Kantei 勘亭 style became common in the 1780s, it was also the duty of the playwrights to write the different flyers and billboards.

82 Identity unknown. Tobun appears in Tsurumi Sansha's 鶴見傘車 pictured haikai collection *Haikai Sugoroku from the Eastern Sea Road* 東海道中俳諧双六 (*Tōkai Dō chū haikai sugoroku*, 1733 in 関東俳諧叢書 *Kantō haikai sōsho* 1) where Danjūrō II also has a poem. In *The Hakuen Diary* 柏莚日記 (*Hakuen nikki*), on the 26th day of the 1st month Genbun 5 [1740], there are records of Danjūrō II and III conferring with the playwright Fujimoto Tobun 藤本斗文. The records of the minor playwright Tobun 兎文 in 1734 might be related to him, or be an earlier writing of the same name, but there is no definite proof.

The Payment of Wages

Records on the internal management of the Ichimura Za in 1734 detail the payment of the 9th month' wages.

According to Nakamura Jūsuke II, one-third of the actors' wages was to be paid before the *kaomise* play started, around the 20th of the 10th month, and the rest was to be divided and paid on the 3rd day of the 3rd month, the 5th day of the 5th month, the 7th day of the 7th month, and 9th day of the 9th month.[83] The *kaomise* payment was obviously economically stressful for the theatres, but in 1734, there was also trouble with the payment of the 9th month at the Ichimura Za.

Late at night, the day before payment was due, the responsible clerk, Sahei 左兵衛,[84] came to Danjūrō's home to discuss wages. Danjūrō wrote:

> I did not like the method of payment one bit and lectured Sahei on the right and wrong of people.[85]

Sahei apologized and left, but this conflict continued 4 days later when Danjūrō II was asked to read a handwritten manuscript on a religious dispute[86] brought to him by his next-door neighbor Bandō Hikosaburō I 板東彦三郎 (pen name Shinsui 薪水, 1693–1751). Hikosaburō and Danjūrō got into a lengthy discussion concerning the "bad behavior" (不行跡 *fugyōseki*) of Hiroji, and continued the next day with a discussion concerning the contract of payment (払の埒 *harai no rachi*). On the 2nd day of the 10th month, Danjūrō decided to call Hiroji to express what he thought was a "reasonable" complaint (道理 *dōri*). Hiroji pacified Danjūrō, and the next day he went to the *zamoto* Uzaemon to make it clear that Danjūrō was right. Clearly the joint effort of the lead actors was effective, because on the 6th day, Sahei and the investor Shōsuke brought the delayed payment with their deepest apologies.

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83 SGR 3: 142–43.

84 Considering the context of Danjūrō's diary, he could well be working in the position of *chōmoto*, but Ihara Seiseien's annotation of the diary records of the 13th day of the 8th month 1734 claims that he must have been a front clerk of the Ichimura Za.

85 払ノ仕方、予ガ気ニイラズ、人ノ邪正ヲ左兵衛ニ語リ聞スル。

86 It concerned the so-called *Shinchi tairon* 身池対論, which according to Fujii (2003: 173–201) was a legal hearing concerning the authority of the shogun towards the Buddhist temples, brought to the magistrate in 1630 by the Kuon Ji Temple 身延久遠寺 in Minobu and the Honmon Ji Temple in Ikegami 池上本門寺.

From these diary records, it is not clear what Hiroji's "bad behavior" and Danjurō's "reasonable complaints" were. Perhaps the Ichimura Za did not have enough cash to pay all the actors, but chose to give priority to Hiroji. Although Hiroji accepted at first, after pressure from Danjūrō he decided to show solidarity to the other actors and insisted on complete payment to all. Situations where actors united to put pressure on the *zamoto*, the clerks and the investors are also depicted in the diary of the playwright and *dōke* 道外[87] actor Kaneko Kichizaemon 金子吉左衛門 (?–1728), especially in the records from the 3rd to the 5th month of 1698, suggesting this was not a unique occurrence.[88]

Nakamura Jūsuke II claims that the actor, who was the *zagashira,* and therefore received the highest wages, also had a responsibility towards the other actors to wait until they had been paid before claiming his own wages.[89] It is not known whether Danjūrō II followed this rule, but on the 30th day of the 9th month – before receiving his pay – Danjūrō noted:

> … this evening Sahei came. I reproached [him for his] dishonesty. Not a word [in answer] […] I will send 20 gold *ryō* to the *zamoto* as I have promised to lend it to him until the 15th day.[90]

Apparently, Danjūrō, who was supposed to be paid, instead lent 20 *ryō* to his boss Uzaemon.

Records from *The Persimmon Covers* are from Danjūrō II's diary and therefore he is the central figure. Still, it seems safe to assume that he had authority in most aspects of the internal management of the Ichimura Za at the time.

On *Wari* and *Ōsajiki*

There are no definite records as to how high the turn over of *The Original Imagawa Letter* was, but in the following I will analyze two terms concerning the ticket sale Danjūrō II frequently uses in his diary, namely *wari* ワリ (わり・割) and *ōsajiki* 大桟敷.

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87 Actor specialized in comical roles.

88 Torigoe 1992: 408–23.

89 SGR 3: 150.

90 此夜、左兵衛来ル。予、不義理ヲ責ム。一言ナシ(中略)金二十両、座元へ十五(日)迄ノ約束ニテ借ス。

The meaning of *wari* in Danjūrō II's context is partly revealed in the record of the 9th day of the 9th month:

> Today, there was a great audience (*ōiri,* 大入), 1,800 *wari*, also on the 8th there was □□[91] *wari*. People climbed onto the stage and we could not use the set. At the Kanzaburō Za, no pay and the play was stopped.[92]

On this day, there was such a large audience that the seats overflowed and people climbed up onto the theatre set at the Ichimura Za, preventing work on the set. At the Nakamura Za next door, however, there was no paying audience and the performance was stopped, Danjūrō wrote rather smugly. Further, he noted that they had "1,800 *wari*". Other examples for the use of the term include the record for the 20th day of the 8th month:

> The play, the *sajiki* boxes and the common seats were all truly exciting. This side, 1,300 *wari*, next door 400 *wari*, makes a difference of 900 *mon*.[93]

Two days later he notes:

> … *ōiri* and *ōsajiki* for the play, 1,500 *wari*, next door they had 700 *wari* over two days.[94]

The next day he continues:

> This day the *wari* was 1,400 *mon*, next door only 400 *mon*.[95]

Then, about a month later, on the 29th day of the 9th month he writes:

> The play is filling up magnificently. The *sajiki* is 900 *wari*.[96]

The word *wari* 割 could imply many different things, from booking rates to tips. However, considering its use in the records mentioned above, it is likely that *wari* refers here to the price of one *sajiki* box on a particular day. "This

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91 Approximately 2 characters missing in the diary script.

92 此日大入、一貫八百ワリ、八日トモニ□□テワリシ也。ブタイ、人ニテ道具カザラレズ。勘三郎座、払ナク、芝居止。

93 芝居サジキ、下共ニ見事ニギアヒ也。手前座、一貫三百ワリ也。隣座、四百ワリ也。九百文ノチガヒ也。

94 芝居大入、大サジキ一貫五百ワリ、隣ハ二日ニテ七百ワリ。

95 此日ワリ一貫四百文、隣ハ只四百文也。

96 芝居見事ナル入、サジキ九百ワリ也。

side" is the Ichimura Za where Danjūrō himself worked, "next door" is the Nakamura Za in the neighboring Sakai quarters.

Recalling the records of the inspection carried out by the magistrate at the Nakamura Za in 1737 analyzed above, the price for a *sajiki* on the east and west sides of the theatre was 2 gold *bu* – or 2,000 *mon*. In *The Hakuen Diary* Danjūrō's note from the 7th day of the 2nd month of 1735 states:

> Great audience, 2,200 *wari*, we put a note on the door saying 'Sold out, come back tomorrow.'[97]

This means that the New Year's performance attracted such a large audience that they had reached maximum capacity. *Sajiki* boxes were sold for 2,200 *mon* on this day. If we interpret the magistrate's record according to Danjūrō, on the 17th day the 9th month 1737, Nakamura Za had a "2000 *wari*" day.

It can be concluded that the price for a *sajiki* box varied each day. But how and when was the price decided?

The audience gained access to the east and west side *sajiki* boxes by booking them with one of the teahouses catering to the theatres. This system was called *chaya gakari* 茶屋がかり. Danjūrō wrote on the 14th day of the 9th month:

> … because tomorrow is the Kanda festival, we have not had one single *sajiki* box reserved, and therefore we will take a break.[98]

This suggests that the theatres made their decisions based on the reservation status the day before the show. In the previously mentioned *Talks on the Boat to the Theatre by Nakamura Jūsuke II,* there is a chapter on the duties of the *chōmoto* 帳元, the clerk responsible for reservations and accounting.[99] Apparently, the teahouses and fan clubs would all submit their requests for *sajiki* boxes to the *chōmoto* in the evening. During the night he would try to fit everybody into the available boxes and adjust the reservation book in a way most agreeable to everyone. The next morning, he would read out the reservation book to the teahouses and the entrance staff. There is no clear mention of it, but it seems possible that the price of the boxes was also decided during the night based on the number of reservations and reported to the teahouses together with reservation status.

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97 大に入、二貫二百わり、札売切申候間、明日御出と云張紙出す。

98 明日十五日ハ神田御祭礼トテ、桟敷一間モ不レ付候故、相休可レ申候由。

99 SGR 3: 132–34.

If true, it would explain the record from the 29th day of the 9th month previously mentioned, where "the play is filling up magnificently" although the price was still only 900 *wari*. This could be seen not as a result of advance reservations, but of good ticket sales on the day of the performance itself.

Turning to Danjūrō's use of the word *ōsajiki*, it appears frequently in his diary (20 times). Interestingly, it is often combined with *ōiri* (12 times) – whereas *ōiri* alone is seen 26 times.

Ōiri simply means "large audience" or "many people". To consider the potential meaning of *ōsajiki*, the diary of a great kabuki fan and regular theatregoer, active about half a century later than Danjūrō, may be of help. The second daimyo of the Yamato Kōriyama 大和郡山藩 domain (Nara Prefecture), Yanagisawa Nobutoki 柳沢信鴻 (1724–92) frequently used a standard phrase *ōiri, kamishimo sajiki nokorazu mōsen* 大入、上下桟敷不残毛氈, which translated as "large audience, there were *mōsen* (felt carpet) in every *sajiki* box on both sides" in his *Special Diary Records on Banquets and Pleasures* 宴遊日記別録 (*Enyū nikki betsuroku*).[100] In contrast, on the 13th day the 9th month 1776 he also noted that "few *mōsen*, large audience",[101] or on the 27th day the 4th month 1778 that "half of the *sajiki* have *mōsen*. Around 8 (2 pm) *ōiri*",[102] or further on the 7th day of the 11th month 1776 that "there were *sajiki* boxes on three sides, even the *rakandai* 羅漢台[103] was covered in red *mōsen*".[104]

In *New Edition of the Great Dictionary of Senryū Poems* 新編川柳大辞典 (*Shinpen senryū daijiten*)[105] the poem

桟敷番赤くないは店を追ひ

Sajikiban / akaku nai wa / mise wo oi

What is not red, the *sajiki* master will drive away

is annotated with the word *mōsen*, indicating that when customers of the teahouses enter the *sajiki* boxes, it was customary to decorate the railing and

100 NSBSS 13: 870–942.

101 毛氈ハ少なく、入りハ一杯。

102 桟敷半毛氈、八頃より大入り。

103 Temporary seats constructed over a part of the back of the scene. The name stems from the way they are seen from the other seats. The audience in these seats looked like the 500 buddhist arhats (jap. *rakan* 羅漢) squeezed together.

104 桟敷三方、羅漢迄緋毛氈。

105 Kasuya 1995: 311.

the floor of the box with red *mōsen* carpets, thus separating the customers of the teahouses from the "common people".

As stated previously, to secure a *sajiki* box at the east or west side of the theatre it was necessary to make a reservation with the teahouses. Hattori shows that from the Hōreki period onwards, the teahouses controlled not only the east and west sides, but also the *mukō sajiki* and the common seats[106] or – as Yanagisawa Nobutoki's record suggests – even the really low-rated seats at the back of the stage.

Nobutoki also wrote about double bookings on the 20th day of the 11th month 1776 and again on the 23rd day of the 3rd month the following year. Records from the 15th day the 11th month the same year clearly show that in cases where teahouse staff were not able to make the previous guests leave, the daimyo household would first spread their *mōsen* in the *kiriotoshi* area, then move to the *mukō sajiki* before they finally settled in the *sajiki* they had reserved.

Hattori claims that this trend started during the Hōreki period, but in the *Folding Screen of the Nakamura Za Kabuki Theatre* 中村座歌舞伎芝居屏風 (*Nakamura Za kabuki shibai byōbu*, fig. 2), which depicts the New Year's play *The Nagoya Courtesan Lottery* 傾城福引名護屋 (*Keisei fukubiki Nagoya*) staged in 1731, when Danjūrō and Kikunojō continued a raving success for more than half a year, *mōsen* are depicted spread out in the first row of the common seats, separated by temporary railings. As no records referring to this phenomenon exist, it is difficult to make any definitive statement. However, Danjūrō notes on the 7th day of the 9th month 1734 "*sajiki* also in the south (*mukō-sajiki*) and north (common seats), this day is *ōsajiki*".[107] Perhaps reservations with the teahouses for lower seats during especially successful shows already occurred in the Kyōhō period, as well.

Images depicting early Edo period theatres, do not only depict red *mōsen,* but carpets and cloths of various patterns and materials also decorate the *sajiki* seats. Teahouses operating close to the theatres existed, but were mostly lowly establishments, often just simple stands under umbrellas and without the capacity to cater to the needs of wealthy customers in the *sajiki* boxes. During this time, the *mōsen* were not a symbol for the teahouses but a status symbol for the wealthy customers themselves. There were also teahouses that managed the kabuki actors' prostitution from the beginning of the Edo period,

106 Hattori 1975: 32.

107 南北桟敷、其日大桟敷。

but the earliest records of organized *chaya gakari* service inside the theatre appear at about the beginning of the Enpō period, in the late 1670s. We can see proper theatre teahouses depicted for the first time in the *Pictured Folding Screen of the Miyako Man Tayū Theatre* 都万太夫芝居屏風図 (*Miyako Man Tayū shibai byōbu zu*, fig. 3). Another example from about the same time is a folding screen showing *Inside and Outside the Nakamura Kabuki Theatre* 中村座舞台屏風 (*Nakamura butai byōbu*, Boston Museum of Fine Arts), and Fujimoto Kizan 藤本箕山 (1626–1704) describes the theatre teahouses in his *Great Mirror to the Way of Eroticism* 色道大鏡 (*Shikidō ōkagami*, 1678).[108] Therefore it seems plausible that the *chaya gakari* system was established at about this time. From the pictures we can also deduce that the teahouses already used *mōsen* at this time. However, in Danjūrō's diary, there is but one single mention: on the 30th day of the 9th month he writes that "*sajiki* were packed tightly, even on the side of the scene there were *mōsen,* it was an *ōsajiki*".[109] Thus, despite the fact that the teahouses did use the red *mōsen* to mark their territory, the word *mōsen* had not yet become a synonym for the *chaya gakari* system as such.

Nevertheless, the word *mōsen* certainly carried symbolic meaning in Nobutoki's diary and from the *senryū* poems, we can deduce that this transformation of the word's usage took place somewhere around the late Hōreki period. Examples from the *senryū* collection *The Willow Barrel* 柳多留 (*Yanagi daru*) include:

もふせんでさじきをはらふ油むし

Mōsen de / sajiki wo harau / abura mushi

Mōsen gets rid of the cockroaches in the *sajiki* boxes[110]

むしをおひ出してもふせん引かける

Mushi wo oi / dashite mōsen / hikkakeru

Get rid of the worms and spread the *mōsen*[111]

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108 SO 66–67.

109 桟敷ヒシト有、張出シ迄毛氈カヽル大桟敷也。

110 Hōreki 12 [1762] (Yamazawa 1995: 123).

111 An'ei 2 [1773] (ibid.: 290).

もふせんでおつはらわれる百さじき

Mōsen de / opparawareru / hyaku sajiki

The *hyaku sajiki* that are evicted by the *mōsen*[112]

According to Koike Shōtarō, who has analyzed kabuki from the point of view of *senryū* comic poems, the "worms" and "cockroaches" refer to people who sneak in without paying, and *hyaku sajiki* 百桟敷 (*sajiki* for 100 *mon*) was a term used for seats at the back of the *mukō sajiki*.[113] Apparently, the reason these seats cost only 100 *mon* was that one hardly heard the actors. On the positive side, there was the possibility of using the corridor connecting the boxes at the back to sneak into the good *sajiki* boxes on the east and west sides. The guests from the cheap boxes could remain seated until *chaya gakari* guests arrived. The analysis in the *Discussion on the 15th Edition of the Willow Barrel Haikai Collection* 誹風柳多留一五篇 : 輪講 (*Haifū Yanagidaru jūgo hen*: *rinkō*) differentiates this interpretation by arguing that *hyaku sajiki* was a general term referring to cheap *sajiki* guests.[114]

If we take another look at the folding screen depicting the New Year's performance of 1733 at the Ichimura Za mentioned in above (fig. 1), the large audience is shown, and the *sajiki* boxes are packed. However, in the first floor boxes, not a single *mōsen* can be seen. This situation is also confirmed in the *The Big Ukiyo-e from the Kaomise Performance* 芝居狂言舞台顔見世大浮世絵 (*Shibai kyōgen butai kaomise ō ukiyo e*, Tokyo National Museum) from 1744. In the first floor east side *sajiki* boxes 3–9 from the stage, the seats for the spectators are not decorated with *mōsen*. We can guess that these might be the "cockroaches" and *hyaku sajiki* customers referred to in the *senryū* poems.

This also explains Nobutoki's statement mentioned earlier that the situation was "*ōiri, sajiki* only half *mōsen*", because even during performances with numerous spectators, the proportion of guests who reserved through the teahouses varied greatly. It further helps explain the previously analyzed magistrate's record of the inspections at the Nakamura Za on the 17th day the 9th month 1737 – despite the huge success of the play running for more than 4 months, of the 62 available *sajiki* boxes on the east and west side, only 32 had been sold. Hara Morikazu likely referred to this state of affairs when he said "There are *sajiki* boxes, however they are rarely profitable" (see above). Reserving with

112 An'ei 7 [1778] (ibid.: 327).

113 Koike 1997: 110, 317–18.

114 Sei 2010: 96.

Fig. 2 Folding Screen of the Nakamura Za Kabuki Theatre
New Year's play "The Nagoya Courtesan Lottery", 1731

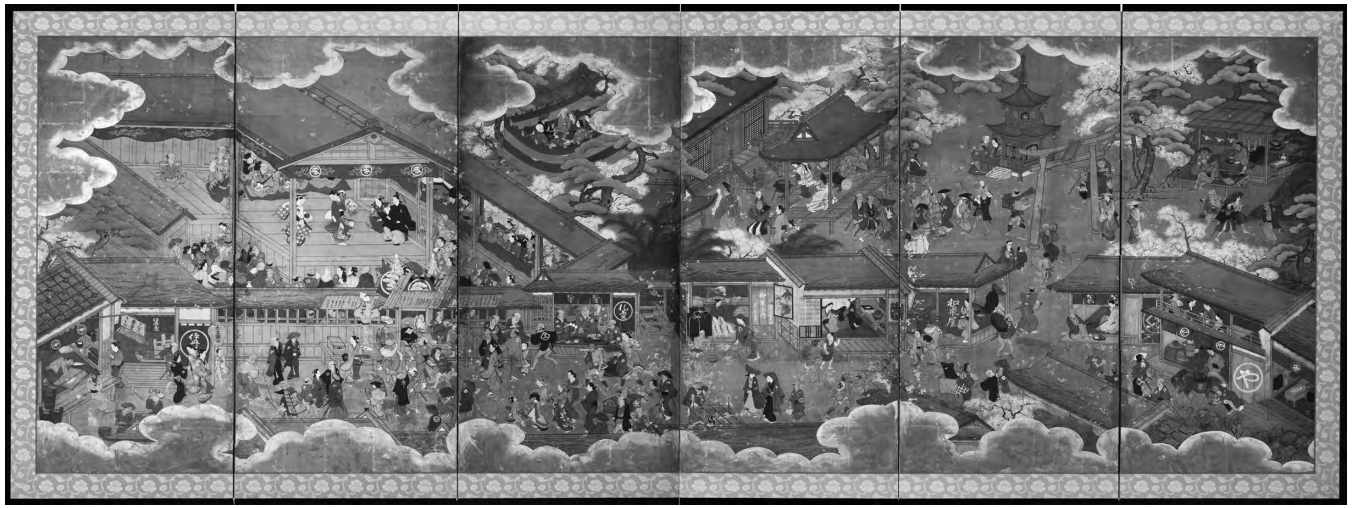

Fig. 3 Pictured Folding Screen of the Miyako Man Tayū Theatre, ca. 1680

the *chaya gakari* system was a rule, but was expensive and there were days when most customers would buy their tickets directly at the door. These were the days when Danjūrō registered low *wari*.

Considering all of the above, it is possible that the word *ōsajiki* (according to Danjūrō II) referred to the level of *chaya gakari* reservation, such as when all the boxes on the east and west sides were full, or when the teahouse guests occupied part of the *kiriotoshi* area and *mukō-sajiki*. Danjūrō wrote about *ōsajiki*, but in the later Edo period, the *chaya gakari* system came to be represented by the red *mōsen* in literary expression, indicating that Nobutoki was describing the same phenomenon as Danjūrō II, but using another word for it.

To understand the cooperation between the teahouses and theatres, the relevant diary records written in the autumn of 1734 will be considered.

The Teahouses

On the 18th day of the 9th month, first the *zamoto,* then a representative of the teahouses, Daikokuya Kusaemon 大黒屋久左衛門 (pen name Daiku 大久), came to Danjūrō backstage and asked him to prolong the play another 10 days. The following day messengers from other teahouses, Tentsu 沾津 and Bairi, also made their requests for prolongation, and Danjūrō eventually agreed. The next day, all the employees of all the teahouses dressed up in formal *kamishimo* 裃 and came to thank Danjūrō for his cooperation.

The next day, Danjūrō worked on the play's extension. *The Original Imagawa Letter* had already run to the 3rd act according to Jihei II's script, thus in order to prolong it, they needed to come up with a new act. The Ichimura Za had been without a lead author for two weeks, and although Eda Yaichi had signed the transfer a couple of days before the request, Danjūrō decided to write the script for the new act himself. He called Chinshō and dictated the new act on the 21st. Rehearsals were set to take place during the evening starting from the 22nd. On the 26th, the new act was staged, and the show successfully prolonged its run until approximately the 14th day of the 10th month.

The urgency of this extension was due to the fact that Ichimura Za had not had a great year in 1734 as documented in records about trouble with San'emon and delayed payments. Moreover, Kikunojō and Sōjūrō starred together at the rivaling Nakamura Za in the play *Eighteen Modern Soga Brothers* 十八公今様曽我 (*Jūhachikō imayō Soga*), where the classic act *Evening Mist at the Top of Mt Asama* 夕霧浅間岳 (*Yūgiri Asama ga dake*) was a tremendous hit from the first month until the end of the 7th month, thus further luring customers away

from the Ichimura Za. Danjūrō lamented on the 15th day of the 7th month: "the theatre is also in a depression. That is, there are no passers-by in the streets, it is quieter than an ordinary bon season."

Therefore it was vital not only for the economy of the theatre, but also for the surrounding teahouses to let *The Original Imagawa Letter* run for as long as possible. It had finally become a hit and the Ichimura Za won back its customers.

Conclusion

We have now looked at the basic economic structure of theatres during the mid-Edo period and at records describing Danjūrō II's activities as a backstage manager. The businesses continued their day-to-day activities making short-term profits where they could while running with a long-term deficit. Analyzing the diary records of Danjūrō II, it is clear that the dealings and negotiations between the *zamoto, zagashira*, actors, playwrights and clerks were dependent upon a complicated network defined by personal power and authority. Danjūrō II had considerable weight within this network. In addition to being asked for advice by both the *zamoto* and investors, he participated in the management of other actors' and playwrights' contracts. Yet, he could also rally the actors to put pressure on theatre management in the case of failing payments and generally had his voice heard in most matters concerning the running of the theatre.

The year 1734 was, in an economic sense, a very serious year for the world of kabuki. The Nakamura Za was being sued by its investor; the Ichimura Za was late with payments and in the Kobiki quarters the Morita Za had to apply for *kyūza*. In this context, Danjūrō worriedly monitored the economic situation, taking notes on fluctuating *sajiki* prices and the percentage of *sajiki* guests reserved.

He was certainly not the only one who was concerned. Around the time when *The Original Imagawa Letter* was running towards its final days, on the 9th day of the 10th month, the young actor Kawarasaki Chōjūrō 河原崎長十郎 (–1775), the adopted son of Kawarasaki Gonnosuke II, came to Danjūrō to ask for advice on how to apply for a license to open a theatre in the Kobiki quarters. Gonnosuke II was the holder of an old, inactive business license for a kabuki theatre, but joint efforts of the Kobiki quarter merchants, theatre clerks, actors, landlords, teahouse owners and many others, resulted in the revival of this license as one of three *hikae yagura* permits granted by the magistrate

the following year. Thus, the world of kabuki business lived on in spite of its structural flaws.

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